

Sumner E. Karas, M.D. /Arthroscopy POST-OP Instructions

SURGERY

Your surgery will be performed entirely through 3 or 4 small incisions around your shoulder. Through these incisions, using a small viewing instrument called an arthroscope, Dr. Karas will remove bone spurs and other abnormal tissue from your shoulder. The details of your particular surgery will be discussed with you during your first postoperative visit and with family members immediately after surgery. At the time of your first post-op visit Dr. Karas will review the photographs that will be taken at the time of your surgery.

DRESSING

During surgery, fluid is continuously flowing through the shoulder to aid in visualization. As a result, it is normal to see blood stained fluid leaking through the dressings for the first 24-48 hours after surgery. If the dressing becomes stained after you arrive home, simply remove it and replace it with sterile bandages, which may be purchased at any pharmacy. Two days after surgery, if there is no more drainage, you may take the bandage off and cover each incision with a clean band-aid. It is normal for your shoulder to be swollen for several days after surgery. It is also normal to see a good deal of discoloration around your shoulder, arm and chest after surgery. If there are any signs of infection, such as redness or if you have a fever greater than 101, call our office immediately.

PAIN

At the time of your pre-operative visit, you will be given a prescription for pain medication, usually Percocet and/or Oxycontin. Most patients require these medications for 4-7 days after surgery. These narcotic medications should be taken only as needed for pain control, and should be stopped when non-narcotic medicines are adequate to control your pain. These medications may cause drowsiness; therefore, you may **not** operate a motor vehicle while taking these medications. You may also experience constipation; therefore, drink a lot of fluids and eat fiber. Many patients benefit from taking anti-inflammatory medicine such as, Aleve or Motrin, along with the narcotic medications. Use of crushed ice in double plastic bags can greatly reduce pain and swelling for the first 72 hours after surgery.

BATHING

You may not shower until 4-5 days after surgery, until then you may sponge bathe, but do not get the incisions wet for 4-5 days. You should not soak your shoulder in a swimming pool, bathtub, or whirlpool until **AT LEAST 14 DAYS AFTER SURGERY**. Remember not to soak or scrub the incisions. Avoid putting any ointment, lotions, etc on the incisions. Pat the area dry and place band-aids on the incisions.

SLING

You should remove your sling as soon as the effects of the nerve block have worn off. Once you remove your sling, **DO NOT PUT IT BACK ON.**

ACTIVITY

You may use your arm for **very** light activities as pain allows once the sling is off. Under no circumstances should you do any sudden movements, repetitive reaching or heavy lifting with your arm for the first 3-4 weeks after surgery. You may drive when you are no longer taking narcotic medications.

PHYSICAL THERAPY

Dr. Karas would like you to start range of motion exercise the day after surgery. These exercises should be performed every 1-2 hours for short periods of time throughout the day. These exercises will include lying on your back and using your “good arm” to elevate your surgical arm overhead. In addition, you should try to use your good arm to help your surgical arm reach up behind your back and across your body. It is ok to be a little uncomfortable when doing these range of motion exercises, but lots of pain will be counterproductive. Many patients are able to regain mobility on their own, and a decision as to whether or not physical therapy will be necessary will be made at the time of your post-op visit. The sooner one regains full mobility, the better off one will be.